

Probe violations of human rights

CHT Commission urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Commission yesterday expressed grave concern over the violations of human rights of the indigenous people at Sajek in Rangamati and urged the government to investigate the incidents immediately.

"As you are aware, tension between indigenous peoples (Paharis), Bengali settlers and the army has been rising in Sajek for many years, and has reached particularly intense levels over the past year," the commission said in a letter to the prime minister.

The letter signed by CHT Commission Co-chairs Eric Avebury, Sultana Kamal and Ida Nicolaisen was also sent to the CHT affairs ministry, Peace Accord Implementation Committee, Parliamentary Standing Committee on CHT affairs ministry, home ministry and the National Human Rights Commission.

The commission urged the government to ensure that those found responsible for violations are arrested and

prosecuted and that reparations are made to the victims for their security and safety.

"On April 20 last year, a group of settlers attacked several indigenous villages, injuring people and burning down more than 70 houses, with no effective intervention by the authorities and despite the presence of nearby army camps. Subsequently, many indigenous people fled the area and lived in hiding," said the letter.

"On August 19 the same year, Ladu Moni Chakma, aged 55, of Sajek, was killed. Although arrests have been made regarding the killing, no one has yet been charged either for the arson attacks or the killing," it added.

"On May 6 this year, two settlers -- Alkajija and Mojibor -- were allegedly kidnapped from Sajek, and their bodies recovered from the same area four days later."

"It appears that six Pahari villagers were arrested on May 10 in connection with this incident, and since then, many Paharis have alleged

continuing harassment by the army," the letter said.

"On July 2, 2009, a group of local Paharis held a press conference in Dhaka where they made a number of allegations concerning arrests, persecution and land occupation in Sajek."

"Following their return to their villages, they alleged that they were harassed by settlers and army personnel, and that two local people from Sajek had been arrested and questioned about the particulars of the participants of the press conference," the letter added.

"The failure to implement key provisions of the CHT Accord, including the return of land to the indigenous peoples and the withdrawal of temporary army camps from the area is a major contributory factor to such violations," the CHT Commission said.

To fully implement the CHT Accord of 1997, the commission urged the authorities to put an immediate end to all attacks against indigenous communities and individuals in CHT.

DCC engineer Faruk Aziz gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Dhaka City Corporation Superintendent Engineer Mohammad Faruk Aziz, who was arrested on charge of brandishing a fire-arm at his boss.

Metropolitan Magistrate SK Tofael Hassan passed the order upon a bond of Tk 20,000 with two guarantors.

The investigation officer and recording officer of the case also appeared before the court to explain why they did not include a non-bailable section ever though there are specific allegations against the accused in the first information report.

They told the court that they did not include the non-bailable section in the case, as the accused did not commit any offence of shooting.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Faruk Aziz from Sheikherke in Mohammadpur area at around 8:00pm on Wednesday after the DCC chief engineer's staff officer filed a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station on Sunday in this regard.

Farukh threatened DCC Chief Engineer Brig Gen Abdul Quadir showing off a pistol during a discussion about his promotion on September 27.

After receiving a complaint from the chief engineer, Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka suspended Faruk.

BAF replacing peacekeepers in Congo

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Air Force is going to replace its contingent in UN Peacekeeping Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC).

BANAIR-7 will be replaced by BANAIR-7 consisting of 253 BAF members.

As part of this programme, a 10-member BAF team left Dhaka for Congo by a UN chartered plane last night. Remaining contingent members will leave Dhaka for Congo by October 18 in different flights.

BANAIR-7 is comprised of Air Field Services Unit and Utility Aviation Unit.

Bangladesh Air Force is also going to deploy a 40-member BAF contingent (BAN MOVCON Unit-1) for the first time in Chad and Central African Republic.

Jubo League observes hartal at Zakiganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Tense situation was prevailing in frontier Zakiganj upazila yesterday as a daylong hartal called by the local Jubo League on Wednesday night was observed here protesting the excesses of police at the local immigration office.

A contingent of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel was deployed in addition to an additional police team at the upazila headquarters.

Businessmen put up their shutters while no human haulers or any other vehicles plied on the road till noon due to the hartal protesting the arrest of Jubo League men and 'wrongdoings' by the immigration police.

Meanwhile, Senior Judicial Magistrate of Zakiganj Shabbir Mahmud Chowdhury granted bail to four Jubo and Srantik League men who were arrested on Wednesday night and sent Faruque Ahmed, joint convener of upazila Jubo League, to Sylhet central jail rejecting his bail prayer.

Sources said Ashuk Ahmed and Alauddin reported to Zakiganj immigration office on Wednesday afternoon for a visit to India. The immigration staffs asked them for filling a form in English, though it had both the languages.

An immigration police asked some money to help fill the form in English as they pressed for doing that in Bangla. Faruque, Jalal Ahmed and Abdus Shahid, joint convener of upazila Srantik League, reached the spot and exchanged some heated words. At a stage, they assaulted an immigration police staff physically.

However, the Jubo League men denied the allegations and claimed that they had just protested police harassment and their demand for money. Zakiganj police reached the spot and arrested the five Jubo and Srantik League men.



Admission seekers wait in queues to collect their admission test forms for the first year honours courses at Dhaka University. The photo was taken from in front of the Janata Bank at Teacher-Student Centre yesterday.

Concern over sorry state of women's rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday expressed deep concern over the sorry state of women's rights in the country.

They termed the situation alarming saying that the number of rape incidents and enforcement of fatwas are increasing in recent days.

Addressing the seminar, the Netherlands Ambassador Alphons Hennekens expressed his concern over the state of women's rights in the country.

He said the recent incident of gangrape of a schoolgirl published in The Daily Star shows how vulnerable is the right of women in this society.

"We are talking about the women's rights, but the real scenario in the country is that 10 activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) allegedly gangraped a teenage girl, a class 'VII' student from Pakhimara in Kalapara upazila," said the envoy.

He said it is very concerning that the activists of pro-government student wing are involved in such a heinous crime when the government is trying its best to combat violence against women.

Before starting his scheduled speech, the Netherlands envoy read out the report published in The Daily Star of September 30.

He read, "The activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) allegedly gangraped a teenage girl on Friday night, but were handed down a mere punishment at a village arbitration arranged to ensure their escape by local Awami League leaders. Farcical arbitration let 16 culprits get away with a fine of Tk 10,000 each. Victim's poor father dares not to file case."

The ambassador further read out, "Police also released two of the accused held on the spot while handing the victim over to her father early Saturday morning," to express his dismay and deep concern over the incident.

The dissemination seminar was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands at a city hotel to present a BIDS study titled 'An inventory and statistics on violence against women in Bangladesh: Putting into place a database'.

The study revealed that in spite of legal measures and support services by government and non-government organisations, violence against women is still increasing due to several reasons.

These include no change in deep-rooted values, beliefs and attitudes towards women, social tolerance to domestic violence, underreporting of cases of violence against women, complicated and lengthy legal process, ineffective implementation of laws and lack of gender sensitivity in dealing with the cases of violence by police and judicial authorities.

The study also revealed that effective policies to deal with violence against women cannot be taken due to lack of adequate data and information in this regard.

It said in order to formulate appropriate policies and programmes to address the violence against women it is a must to establish a databank which will provide accurate

and updated data to address the issue properly.

Addressing the seminar as chief guest State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Dr Shirin Sharmin Choudhury said patriarchal mindset towards women triggers violence against women, and as such it is needed to change the mindset first to combat all sorts of violence against women.

"The government is very much sincere not only to combat violence against women but also to keep the society free from violence," said the state minister, adding, "We are working on to

ALCWC meets Oct 3

UNB, Dhaka

The first meeting of the new Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held on October 3.

The meeting will be held at the AL President's Dhanmondi office at 10:00am with party Chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair, said a press release yesterday.

EDUCATION BOARDS

Body formed to remove managerial weaknesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry formed a nine-member committee yesterday to give recommendations to remove the current managerial weaknesses of secondary and higher secondary education boards.

Headed by Nurul Alam, former chairman of Rajshahi Education Board, the committee will review the laws and rules of the boards to make them more effective, says an official release.

The committee will reassess the rationality of the financial benefits being received by the board officials and employees and recommend in the issues of increasing standards of question

papers of the exams. It will also recommend taking remedial measures to stop harassment of the students, teachers, guardians and others concerned who come to the boards for different purposes.

Dhaka Education Board will give the secretarial assistance to the committee. The committee will submit its recommendations within the next two months. Other members of the committee include Nazim Uddin, former director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Prof Mahfuza Khanam, two educationists nominated by the committee, two guardians and two teacher representatives.

There is a need for coordination between the government and non-government organisations to stop violence against women, she added.

Termining violence against women an impediment to country's forward march Meher said it is very much important to create awareness among the people about the rights of women.

Mahreen Sultan of BRAC University moderated the seminar which was also addressed by BIDS Director General Dr MK Mujeri, First Secretary of the Netherlands Embassy Henny De Vries and human rights activist Dr Hamida Hossain.

Fire at steel re-rolling factory in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Some valuable machinery and equipment are feared damaged in a fire at an under-construction factory building of Bangladesh Steel Re-rolling Mill (BSRM) in Chittagong yesterday.

Sources said the fire broke out at the under-construction billet plant of Bangladesh Iron and Steel Company (BISCO) of BSRM located near Oxygen intersection in the city at around 4.55pm.

Sources in the factory said a good number of valuable machinery were brought to set up in the factory in last few months.

Several fire fighting units from different fire stations rushed to the spot and continued efforts to extinguish the blaze till filing of the report at 7.15pm.

Obituary

UNB, Chittagong

Hari Prasanna Pal, a folk singer, passed away at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Wednesday night at the age of 80.

He was admitted to CMCH on September 22 as he was suffering from brain hemorrhage.

He left behind his wife, one son, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Different socio-cultural organisations, including Udichi Shilpa Gosthi and Bodhon Abritti Sangathan, expressed deep shock at his death.

Aminur Rahman Khan
METRO DESK



Aminur Rahman Khan, former chief engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board, passed away due to renal failure and cardiac arrest at Ayesha Memorial Hospital on Tuesday at the age of 83, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at Banani graveyard in the city.

His kulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers today at his residence (House-7, Road-18, Sector-7, Uttara) in the city.

Moin Chisti

METRO DESK

Moin Chisti, a former additional inspector general (AIG) of police and a columnist, died of cardiac arrest at BIRDEM Hospital in the city on Wednesday evening at the age of 65, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the Kulkhwani of late Chisti at House No. 22, Road No. 9/A at Dhanmondi after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Md Neyamat Jahan

DU CORRESPONDENT

Md Neyamat Jahan, a former official of James Pharmaceuticals, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 68, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and three children to mourn his death.

His Kulkhwani will be held at his residence in the city after Asr prayers today.

Bangladesh-US ties get new dimension

UNB, New York

In the changed global perspective, bilateral ties between Bangladesh and the United States seemingly assumed new dimensions as the Obama administration wants to move with the Hasina government in resolving critical challenges like nuclear enrichment by North Korea and Iran, changing climate, food security and international peace.

Diplomatic sources told UNB that the US sought support of Bangladesh in critical areas: co-sponsoring UN resolutions seeking sanctions on North Korea and Iran over the nuclear row and recognition of Kosovo as an independent Balkan state cut out from the defunct Yugoslavia.

The sources said it would be too tough for Bangladesh to take decision on North Korea and Iran because of geopolitical and religious reasons.

On recognition of Kosovo, Dhaka would again consider its ties with Moscow as well as the sentiments of the OIC member-states in taking any such tough decision about the Balkan state, though 64 countries gave the recognition.

In recent times, the US has stepped up its diplomatic offensive in realising Bangladesh's recognition of Kosovo. But Bangladesh likes to buy time to take any precise decision on this sensitive issue on the global diplomatic plane.

Asked about the new developments in multilateral diplomacy at the United Nations,

Pirate arrested in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a notorious pirate of the Sundarbans from Nildumur Pashurtala under Shyamnagar upazila in Satkhira on Wednesday.

The pirate Amjad Hossain, 42, is the son of late Asadul Sarder of Baka village under Paikgacha upazila in Khulna. Rab seized eight single barrel guns, 100 rounds of bullet and 28 cartridges from his possession.

He was being interrogated at the Rab-6 headquarters at Khalishpur in Khulna city till filing this report at 5:30pm yesterday.

One killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

An elderly man was killed in a road accident at Godagari road in Chapainawabganj yesterday.

The victim was identified as Sanjur Rahman, 75, of Arambagh Mohalla in Chapainawabganj town.

Police and victim's family members said when he was returning home after morning walk at around 8:00am a speeding motorcycle hit him.

Locals rushed him to Chapainawabganj sadar hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

WEATHER TODAY

Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi division with moderately heavy falls at places in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:45pm today and rises at 6:51am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.9 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.4 degrees Celsius at Mymensingh.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.9	27.2	68	77
Chittagong	32.6	26.2	83	80
Rajshahi	34.2	25.4	81	81
Khulna	33.0	27.0	78	88
Barisal	33.1	26.5	72	84
Sylhet	35.9	25.5	78	65
Cox's Bazar	32.8	25.5	66	81